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VOLUME NINE

EDITED BY
FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN



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TAPESTRIES**

NEW YORK

PARIS



GIOVANNI BELLINI: THE FEAST OF THE GODS
Collection of Mr. Carl W. Hamilton, New York City

ART IN AMERICA · AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE · VOLUME IX NUMBER I · DECEMBER MCMXX

BELLINI'S FEAST OF THE GODS



IOANNES BELLINVS VENETVS. P. MDVIII." Thus runs the signature of the latest masterpiece by Giovanni Bellini that has come to America.

And thus runs the account of it given by Vasari in his *Life of Titian*:

"Duke Alfonzo of Ferrara having, in the year 1614, furnished a small room, some of whose panels he entrusted to Dosso desired to have there some paintings from the hand of Gian Bellino

as well; who made in another panel a butt of red wine with bacchanti, musicians, satyrs and other drunken males and females around it, and near by a Silenus all nude (sic) and very beautiful, astride his ass, with figures round him having their hands full of fruit and grapes: which work was in truth carried out and coloured with as great care as any one of the finest works that Gian Bellino ever did, although in the way of treating the draperies there is a certain sharpness of edge in the German fashion; but this has no importance, because he was merely imitating a picture of the Flemish (sic) Albert Dürer which at that time had been brought to Venice and placed in the Church of San Bartolomeo, a fine thing and full of many beautiful figures painted in oils. Gian Bellino wrote on the above mentioned butt these words IOANNES BELLINVS VENETVS P. MDVIII; which work he himself not being able to finish on account of his extreme old age, was taken over by Titian, as superior to all the others."

This picture, after leaving Ferrara, was in the Ludovisi and Aldobrandini collections in Rome, and then found a long resting-place in England at Alnwick Castle. Our old friends, Crowe and Cavalcassele saw it there and commented upon it in that balanced opposition of phrases which we so often note in them, and which seems to be due to the collaboration of the journalist, unwilling to sacrifice any of his ready-made haphazard phrases, and the true dilettante. "The gay and sensual scene" which Bellini painted "in extreme old

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age, and on the brink of the grave, . . . with the lightsome heart of youth," is both "a composition remarkable for simplicity and an elevated feeling of selection" and "a quiet orgy on the bank of a stream at eventide."

From the Duke of Northumberland this great work has passed into the collection of Mr. Carl W. Hamilton of New York, who is now generously giving the public a chance to enjoy it in the Metropolitan Museum.

Few pictures are better authenticated; and if, a generation ago before the amazing chronology of Bellini—that Tree of Jesse of the whole Venetian School—was worked out, it was permissible and even logical to question whether it might not be the work of some one of the closest pupils of Bellini's old age, such as Bissolo or Basaitti, such a doubt can no longer arise. We at last know Giambellino in all the stages of his incredible development, almost year by year; and, with this increased and detailed knowledge, all doubts of the complete authenticity of this work are laid to rest. The background is clearly Titian's, but no less clearly the figures are Bellini's. And we have his name and the date in his own hand.

Author, date, even the original commission and the payment (85 gold ducats), provenance, the wanderings of the picture, and now its home, being all known without possibility of question, the only thing that would seem to be in suspense is, in each case, the impression this achievement may make upon the beholder—that almost incalculable reaction between the creations of genius and the public, for which words are so inadequate.

I have hesitated a long time, and have come with much misgiving to the conclusion that in accepting the editor's kind request to write on this picture for "Art in America" the only thing I could do would be to try, however inadequately, to communicate the first impressions the picture made upon me. They have no interest in themselves. But the ultimate *raison d'être* for looking at a work of art is to derive pleasure from it, direct pleasure and that indirect enhancement of life and expansion of spirit which is the transcending overtone to the immediate sensuous impression; and so there is a certain value in the record of any contact between art and the enjoyer.

With this faint encouragement in my mind, I venture to transcribe the few words I wrote in a letter to a friend, after I had first seen the picture, although in some ways it seems a foolish and perhaps indiscreet thing to do.

The letter dates from January, 1917, and I give it without further apology:

"The Bellini is the most fascinating, the grandest and the most mysterious picture I have ever seen. I knew the photographs, but they in no way whatsoever prepared me for the reality. I have come straight to it from the two famous companion pictures by Titian in Madrid [the "Worship of Venus" and the "Children's Bacchanal"] and, enchanting as they are, in comparison with this these joyous scenes seem almost empty and obvious! For the poetry of Bellini's picture is so profound that one feels one can never exhaust it, nor even entirely understand it. The interpretation of the theme has an unexpectedness and originality that make one realize it is the result of the dreaming and brooding of a great and of a ripe mind. Titian's "Bacchanal" is a frolic of young animals, with, it is true, something of the gravity of the Giorgionesque spirit; but Bellini's "Feast" is (to use an expressive commonplace) on another plane. His figures are true Gods, but not the Gods one is prepared for, not the conventional figures, which, however nobly interpreted, one would tend to read off in the light of what other artists had prepared us to expect. Bellini's Gods fascinate, but they also puzzle the imagination, leading it on and on into paths where it has never before strayed.

The abiding impression this picture has left on me is of having in it come in contact with one of the profoundest and most original Poets the world has ever had, and in a mature and wise and, as it were, already aloof phase of his creative genius.

Of course this impression could not be conveyed without Beauty: but there is something in the picture deeper and more haunting than the beauty that meets the eyes. It has in it the thrill that certain rare voices have when they sing to us airs we know. But over and beyond the familiar melody, there is here a new *Mode*, with intervals and cadences of poetry that no literature has ever prepared us for.

But it is as hard to write about such a thing as it would be to write about one of Bach's grandest Organ Toccatas—I mean, to write about its spiritual, poetical qualities. Only a Poet (in verse or prose) should touch it. Nor is even that necessary, since Bellini has conveyed it all so completely in his own medium.

And what a medium! The composition perfectly holds and satisfies the desire of the eyes for space and balance, variety and repose, simplicity and richness; and the colour is grave and lovely. There is a rivulet of pale and luminous blue running through the whole composition, like a melody of Mozart, breaking finally into that star-shower of blossoms that wreathes the head of one of the young Goddesses. The Titian landscape is full of beauties that are perhaps less unusual, yet with many surprises too, with its glorious play of light, its luxurious foliage and its sparkling water.

But it is the great group of Divinities, who, at rest and play, are all dominated by the solemnity of the Dionysiac Mystery, that forever enthralls the imagination."

Mary Lapan Berenson

SOME SIENESE PAINTINGS IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS

PART THREE

The Diptych, by Paolo di Giovanni Fei, in the collection of Mr. Philip Lehman (Fig. 1), is a very pleasing and representative example of the little portable altar-paintings to the execution of which Fei appears to have devoted so large a portion of his professional activity. Still bright and fresh in their gilding and in their colour, the two panels have come down to us in an untouched and almost unaltered state. In their compositions, and particularly in that of the enthroned Virgin, they strongly recall a very similar, but somewhat earlier, diptych by Paolo in the Academy at Siena (Stanza III, No. 146). The diptych at New York belongs to the artist's more advanced period and already shows, in its forms and draperies, a broadening out of his earlier manner. With a single exception, the types are entirely characteristic of their author. Curiously enough, however, the chubby and vivacious little Christ-Child reveals a singularly marked, although no doubt quite casual, resemblance to the Infants of Lippo Vanni, and especially to the Babe in the Madonna picture, likewise belonging to Mr. Lehman, illustrated by us in the earlier part of this article.

The St. Galganus and a holy Bishop, by Taddeo di Bartolo, in the collection of Mr. D. F. Platt (Fig. 2), although not immune from partial restorations, are authentic and highly characteristic specimens of Taddeo's art. Of the two figures, that of the boyish knight Galgano is, no doubt, the more engaging, and is, for that matter, by no means the least attractive of the many representations of this popular young warrior-saint which Sienese painting has handed down to us. In the severe and elderly Bishop, the artist has had a less romantic subject, but here, also, he has avoided all dullness by his effective arrangement of the draperies, which give to the figure itself a certain pleasing sense of rhythmic motion. Whatever their other merits, the most striking quality of both panels lies in the surprising brilliancy of their colour, which has lost little or nothing of its original clarity and force, and which is both heightened and relieved by the gold in the embroidered portions of the garments. Stylistically, the two paintings still belong to the earlier half of Taddeo's career, and can hardly have been executed much later than 1395.



FIG. 1. PAOLO DI GIOVANNI FELT: DIPTYCH
Collection of Mr. Philip Lehman, New York City

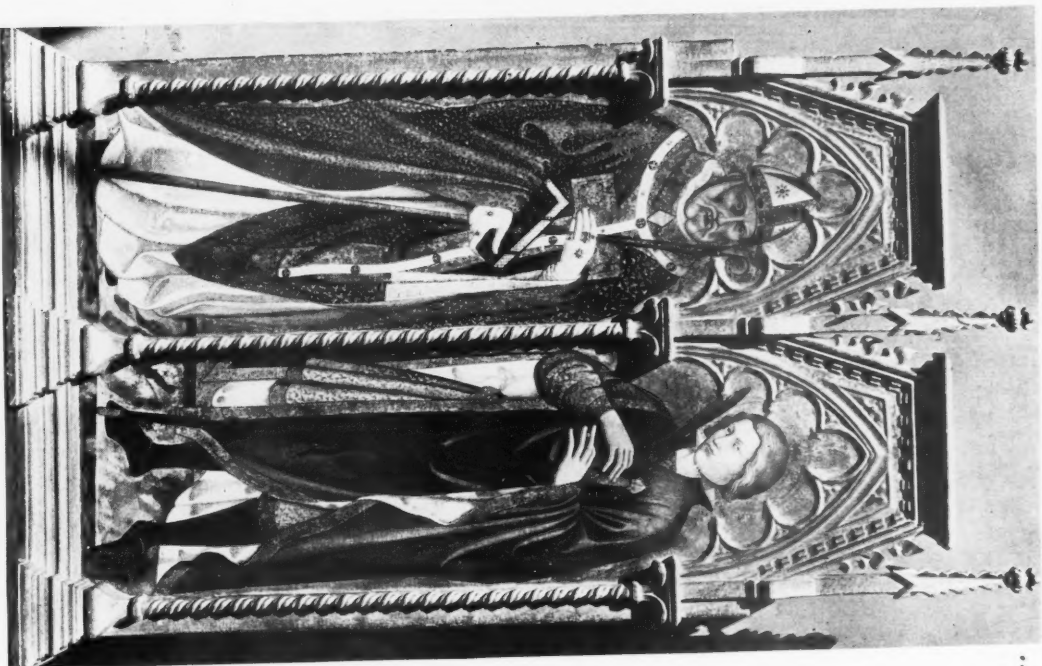


FIG. 2. TADDEO DI BARTOLO: ST. GALLANUS AND A BISHOP SAINT
Collection of Mr. D. F. Platt, Englewood, N. J.

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FIG. 4. ANONYMOUS FOLLOWER OF TADDEO DI
BARTOLO: MADONNA AND CHILD
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. George Blumenthal, New York City



FIG. 3. MARTINO DI BARTOLOMMEO: SS. ANTHONY, STEPHEN, JAMES AND GALGANIS
Collection of the late Theodor M. Davis, Newport, R. I.

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Needless to say, although now united in the form of a diptych, they were at one time compartments of a polyptych and stood on opposite sides of the now missing central panel.

The SS. Anthony, Stephen, James and Galganus (?); the Baptist, the Annunciation and St. Nicholas—belonging to the collection of the late Theodore M. Davis of Newport, R. I.¹ (Fig. 3), despite their general acceptance as works of Taddeo di Bartolo, are not by Taddeo, but by that artist's liege pupil and follower, Martino di Bartolommeo di Biagio. This is unmistakably evident from the heads, alone, of the various figures, all of which display the peculiar oblong, almost rectangular, structure, the full cheeks and strongly developed jaws, which are distinguishing features of Martino's types as compared with those of Taddeo. The folds and disposition of the draperies are hardly less characteristic of the pictures' true author, to say nothing of the colour. Fairly well represented in his native Tuscany—at Siena and more especially in the neighbourhood of Pisa—Martino is scarcely known outside of that particular section of Italy. His hand can be recognized only in two or three scattered paintings in other parts of Europe. The panels here illustrated are, so far as we are aware, the only examples of his work at present in America. Fortunately, they are to be classed among the best of his tempera pictures. In them, Martino reveals a dignity and monumentality of style which fairly rivals that of his master, while he seems actually to surpass Taddeo in the more purely plastic qualities of the extraordinarily well poised and solidly planted figures. It is again hardly necessary to state that the four panels, with their corresponding pinnacle-pieces, were once only the lateral compartments of a large altar-piece. The saint with the sword and the martyr's palm, to the extreme right, does not represent St. Paul—as the modern "gothic" inscription at the base of the panel would have us believe—but, in all probability, either St. Julian or St. Galganus.

By an anonymous follower of Taddeo di Bartolo is a Madonna and Child in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Blumenthal (Fig. 4). This panel, which for pure decorative beauty and winsomeness of sentiment is certainly one of the most attractive paintings of its period in America, has likewise been ascribed to Taddeo. Up to the present the attribution to the well-known Sienese master has met with unanimous approval on the part of the various critics and students who are acquainted with the picture. Again, however, we find

¹ These panels are, we understand, now in the Metropolitan Museum at New York.

ourselves obliged to disagree with such a consensus of opinion. That the types of both Mother and Child betray a distinct family likeness to those of Taddeo, and that the attitudes and disposition of the figures themselves are closely reminiscent of certain of that artist's compositions,² is undeniable and evident. On the other hand, however, a little attentive examination cannot fail to reveal the superficial nature of these resemblances, as well as to disclose the notable differences in style and feeling which separate the painting in question from the authentic creations of its presumed author. The shape and outline of the heads, the limning of the separate features, the peculiar sweetness and amiability of expression in the faces, the simply natural treatment of the draperies, the delightful softness and delicacy of the colouring are all, in reality, very unlike anything we meet with in Taddeo's signed and certain works. That master's strongly specialized types, with their highly characteristic contours and their reserved and pensive, almost melancholy, cast of countenance, have little enough in common with the fully-rounded visages and the smiling, frankly innocent, air of the two figures which greet us here. Taddeo's forms are always more carefully modelled and more strongly felt, his draperies are always arranged with greater artistry and a much more conscious regard for linear effects, than is here the case. His colouring, again, is deeper, harder, and far more brilliant, his design more precise and firm, while his technique, with its polished and enamel-like surfaces—more especially in the flesh parts of his pictures—is quite unlike that which characterizes the execution of this lightly-painted panel. With such a marked difference of style and spirit to distinguish it from Taddeo's work as we are accustomed to know it, it seems hardly necessary to offer any further apology for our inability to support the accepted attribution of Mr. and Mrs. Blumenthal's picture. That the painting is not by Taddeo, but by one of the many artists who, in different parts of Italy, came more or less directly under the spell of his wide-spread influence—in this instance a painter of quite unusual charm and gifted with a truly exquisite colour sense—is, to our mind, quite evident. Who this "ignoto" may have been, we are, however, once

² Both in their grouping and in their separate motives, the two figures present the most striking resemblance to those in the central panel of Taddeo's triptych (dated 1400) in the chapel of S. Caterina della Notte at Siena, for a reproduction of which work—the finest and also the least known of Taddeo's larger altar-pieces—see *Rassegna d'Arte*, August, 1913, page 121. The analogies between the two compositions are so marked and so complete as to leave virtually no doubt that the author of the picture at New York must have owed his design either to this or to some other almost precisely similar painting by Taddeo.

again at a loss to say. His peculiar style certainly does not tally with that of any of Taddeo's known Siennese or Pisan imitators. That he was necessarily a native of Tuscany need not, however, be taken wholly for granted. There is, in fact, much in his work—in its simple ingeniousness of feeling, as in the softness and *morbidezza* of its modelling and colour—that is not exclusively Siennese and which reminds us almost more of the early painting of Umbria. It is not impossible that our "anonimo" may have hailed from that part of Italy. Be this as it may, there can be no possible doubt as to his close derivation from Taddeo, and it need occasion no surprise that, as a follower of that much-imitated artist, he should not only have reflected his chosen master's types, but that he should also have felt no compunction in making direct use, in this particular composition, of one of his model's own designs.

The scene from Life of St. Anthony Abbot by Stefano di Giovanni ("Sassetta") in the Lehman Collection (Fig. 5), although but a recent addition is not entirely unknown to students of Sassetta. It was, in fact, reproduced, some four years ago (at which time it was in the possession of Prince Ourousoff at Vienna) by Herr W. Suida, in his *Österreichische Kunstschatze* (1911, Tafel LVIII), as the work of an unknown Siennese painter of the late Trecento, and was afterwards mentioned, as a quite unmistakable production of Sassetta, by Mrs. Mary Logan Berenson, in a note on certain of that master's paintings, in the *Rassegna d'Arte* for December, 1911. As Herr Suida's publication is, however, one that is hardly likely to have found its way into the hands of more than a very few American readers, we feel that the picture in question well deserves a second reproduction here, both on account of its unusual artistic interest, and as belonging, in all probability, to a dismembered altar-piece, a portion of which is to be identified in one, if not in two other panels which have long been in America and which are today to be seen in the Jarves Collection at New Haven.³ As is the case with the New York picture, the panels at Yale University illustrate events in the life of the celebrated Saint of Coma, but whereas the subject-matter of the latter leaves no room for misinterpretation, the precise signification of the scene represented in Mr. Lehman's painting is difficult to divine, since it does not seem to coincide with any of the better known episodes in the story of the venerable founder of the Egyptian Cenobites. The uncertainty of its subject need not, however, interfere with our

³ Nos. 48 and 53. See Sirén, *Catalogue of Jarves Collection*, Plates 57, 58.

appreciation of the picture's extraordinary charm, which lies, for that matter, less in its human note than in its deeply effective setting. Finely rendered and full of character as is the lonely, white-bearded figure of the aged Hermit-Saint, it is the strangely mysterious spirit of the world in which it moves that chiefly magnetizes our attention and holds us as in a spell. The wonderfully imaginative, though at the same time singularly realistic, winter landscape, with its leafless trees, its scattered animals, its winding stretch of water, its dark, undulating hills and distant snow-clad mountain, its towering castle, its wild cloud-streaked sky, and, above all, its overpowering sense of silence, constitutes, indeed, one of the most profoundly impressive scenic visions to be met with in the entire range of Sienese art. Certainly, among Stefano's own surviving works, it would be difficult to point to any other painting which so clearly reveals the deeply poetic nature of the master's temperament, or which shows, to greater advantage, his keen sensitiveness to the influence of Nature's varying aspects and moods. Of the picture's direct relation to the larger of the two panels at New Haven there can be little or no doubt.⁴ Not only are both paintings equal in size and form, but the type of the silver-haired saint is common to both, while the technical handling and the treatment of the draperies are likewise very much the same. The connection with the smaller of the Jarves panels may appear somewhat less certain, owing to the picture's different shape and dimensions, as well as to the fact that the holy hermit is here represented as considerably less advanced in years. Neither of these discrepancies is, however, sufficient to do away with the probability that this painting, also, belonged originally to the same altar-piece. Apart from an unimportant injury to the lower portion of one of the New Haven pictures, all three panels are happily in excellent condition, Mr. Lehman's, more particularly, being in a truly admirable state of preservation.

By an anonymous follower of Sassetta is *The Way to Calvary* of the John G. Johnson Collection in Philadelphia. The panel (Fig. 6) is a companion-piece to one of similar style and dimensions, representing the Descent of Christ into Limbo, in the Fogg Museum at Cambridge, Mass. (Fig. 7). Both pictures are equally remarkable for their fine preservation and their effective compositions, and both have awakened the admiration of all who have seen them on account of their varied and striking colour, but while the Cambridge panel

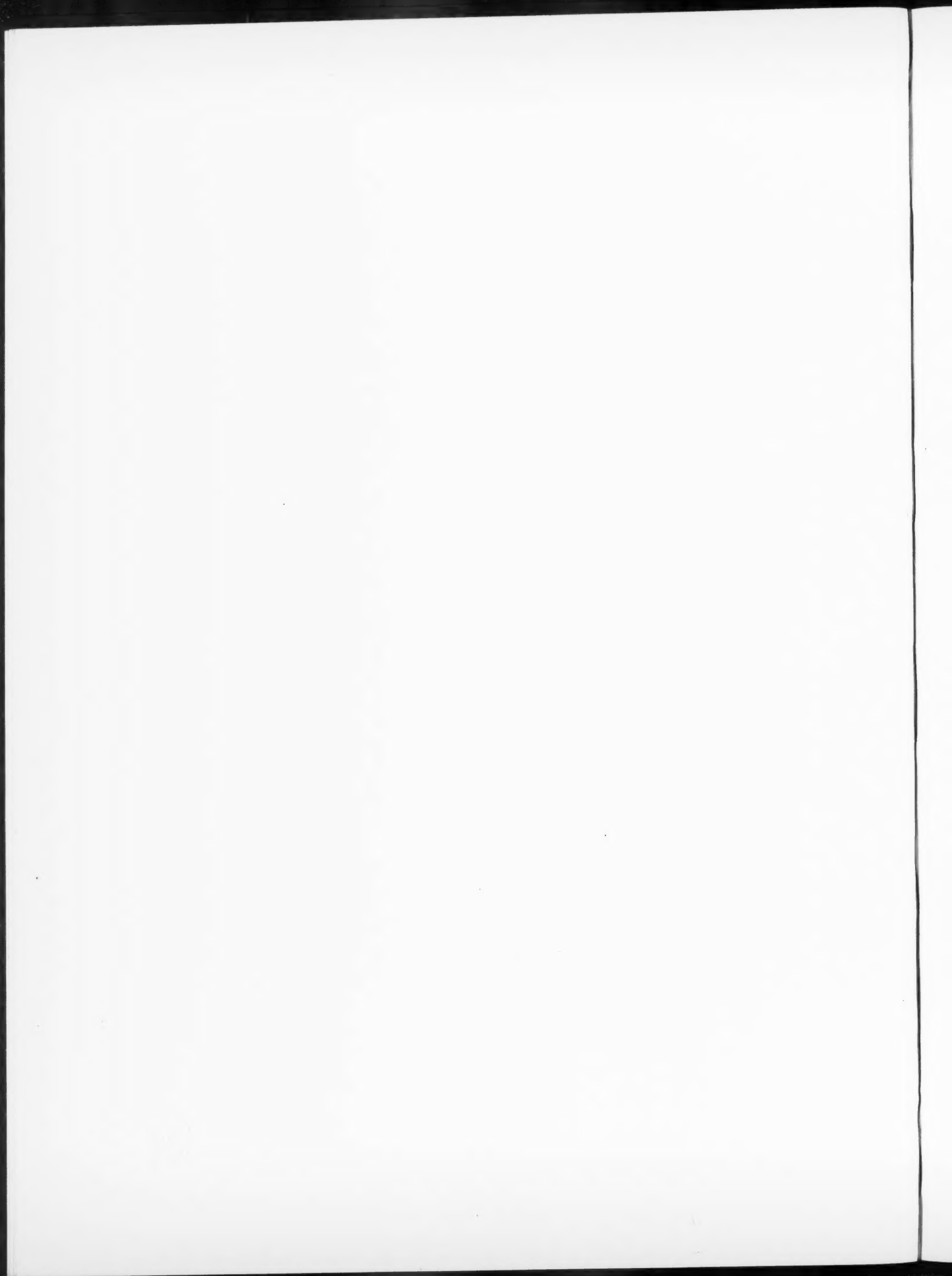
⁴ The connection was remarked by Mrs. Berenson in the above-mentioned note (*Rassegna d'Arte*, December, 1911).



FIG. 8. ANONYMOUS FOLLOWER OF SASSETTA: VIRGIN AND CHILD
Collection of Mr. Philip Lehman, New York City



FIG. 5. STEFANO DI GIOVANNI, "SASSETTA," SCENE FROM THE
LIFE OF SAINT ANTHONY
Collection of Mr. Philip Lehman, New York City



has, during the past few years, become familiar to many students,⁵ that in the Philadelphian collection has remained comparatively unknown, and has, so far as we are informed, never yet been published. Although both paintings have, since their arrival in America, met with unhesitating acceptance as genuine and thoroughly representative works of Sassetta, and although this opinion has been shared by more than one authoritative European critic, we have already had occasion to express, in a recent note,⁶ our fixed doubts as to their being in reality by that artist's hand. We can here only repeat what we there said. To our mind, the compositions of the two panels are, in all probability, based upon original designs by Stefano, but the actual painting of the pictures, as such, is ascribable not to him, but to an able pupil. This is—at least to us—convincingly evident in a number of respects. Aside from any reference to the colour, the figures (more especially in the Johnson panel) lack the fineness of proportion, the ease of action, and the comparative stability, common to those of Sassetta; the disposition of the draperies is, in many instances, very unlike his; the types, while undoubtedly Sassettesque, reveal peculiarities of feature and expression—not to mention, in certain cases, an undeniable touch of coarseness—hardly to be found in the models from which they are derived; the execution—more particularly the drawing of the faces and the forms, and the treatment of such a significant detail as the hair—differs noticeably from the more careful, delicate, and evenly controlled technique which we are wont to associate with the master's authentic work. On the other hand, the compositions themselves, the architecture and the landscape in the Philadelphia panel, the fantastic setting of the Descent into Limbo, are, as we have already hinted, so strongly characteristic of Sassetta that it is difficult to believe that we are not here in the presence of designs furnished by the master himself. That these two pictures were executed, if not in Sassetta's *bottega*, at least under his partial supervision, seems to us all but certain—but even if this were not actually the case, there can be no question as to their direct connection with the master's art. The technical and stylistic peculiarities which they present, and to which we have drawn attention, answer exactly to those which we find in certain paintings attributable to one of the several artists who have

⁵ The picture has been spoken of at length, in a justly appreciative article by Professor Paul J. Sachs, in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* for March, 1916. See also *American Journal of Archaeology*, January-March, 1918, XXII, 97.

⁶ See *Rassegna d'Arte*, July-August, 1918.

hitherto been classed together under the convenient and elastic name of Pellegrino di Mariano. By the same hand, for instance—as we have likewise had occasion to point out in the note referred to above—is a picture, formerly in the Museo Cristiano, and now in the Pinacoteca, of the Vatican, representing the Flagellation, which agrees almost precisely in size, as well as in character, with the two panels at Cambridge and Philadelphia.⁷ The additional fact that this picture has for its subject a scene from the Passion, would certainly seem to justify the supposition that it may have belonged to the same series of which our two paintings once formed a part—that is, to a long predella devoted entirely to representations of the closing episodes of the Saviour's earthly sojourn. Like the panels in America, this Vatican picture is remarkable for its pure and flower-like colour, while its architectural staging is, again, highly characteristic of Sassetta. Whether, however, it actually formed part, or not, of the same series as that of its trans-Atlantic companions, there can be no possible doubt as to the common authorship of all three paintings. Of other probable or certain works by the same hand, we shall have more to say in a future note. For the present it is enough for us to have identified, in this "pseudo-Pellegrino," one of the closest of Sassetta's direct followers—a painter who, in addition to his assimilative faculties, reveals himself as a particularly vivid and delightful colourist.

Also by an anonymous follower of Sassetta is the Virgin and Child in the Lehman Collection (Fig. 8). Here we have another painting which would doubtless be set down unhesitatingly by the average critic, to the credit of the ever-accommodating Pellegrino. The picture introduces us, however, to an as yet unidentified pupil of Sassetta. It differs distinctly, in fact, in its forms and handling, in the peculiar type of the Virgin, and in its cool and temperate colour-scale, not only from the very inferior signed performances of Pellegrino,⁸ but also from the various other panels that have, at different times, been fathered upon that much misunderstood artist. Its author, while betraying, in a quite unmistakable fashion, his immediate descent from Sassetta, reveals, none the less, a very definite character of his own. The idiosyncracies of his style are, indeed, so pronounced that they can hardly fail to lead to the recognition of other works by his hand. For the present, however, we must

⁷ For a reproduction of this picture, see the above-mentioned number of *Rass. d'A.*, page 109.

⁸ For an example of Pellegrino's signed work, see the picture reproduced by us in *Rassegna d'Arte*, July, 1919, page 168.



FIG. 6. ANONYMOUS FOLLOWER OF SASSETTA: THE WAY TO CALVARY
The John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia, Penn.



FIG. 7. ANONYMOUS FOLLOWER OF SASSETTA: DESCENT INTO LIMBO
The Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

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again content ourselves with having drawn attention to his artistic personality. Apart from his inherited decorative sense, and in compensation for a certain hardness in his drawing and technique, our painter displays a colour gift of quite unusual refinement, and it is in its low-keyed and refreshing harmony of tones that Mr. Lehman's panel will make its chief appeal to many. As for the picture's design, we need but compare it with such of Sassetta's paintings as his Madonna-pieces at Bosciano, in the Mignanelli collection at Rome, and in that of Mr. and Mrs. Blumenthal at New York, in order to realize how closely the pupil has sought to imitate the patterns of his master, more especially in the tortuous outlines of the Virgin's mantle. His copy, however, no longer possesses the freedom and natural ease of Stefano's originals—there is already something conscious and almost calligraphic in the disposition and designing of the draperies, something wiry and yet not wholly flexible in the drawing of their curves and folds. Nevertheless, the design in itself is not lacking in effectiveness and contributes its full share to the very decorative impression of the picture as a whole. Apart from a few slight abrasions in the Virgin's mantle, the painting is in an excellent state. Worthy of notice are the little medallions of the Annunciation and the rather unusual decorative motives which fill the angles of the frame.

F. Mason Perkins

A PICTURE OF OTTAVIANO NELLI

PANEL paintings of Ottaviano Nelli are rare; besides the polyptych of Pietralunga of 1403 I can only think of the Renouncement of St. Francis and the Circumcision in the Gallery of the Vatican and a Madonna and angels of the Fabri Collection, Rome (*Rassegna d'Arte*, 1910, p. 76). To these one should add the *Adoration of the Magi* of the Museum of Art at Worcester, Massachusetts (p. 24).

This small panel terminates above in a pointed arch; the Virgin seated in front of the shelter holds the Babe who accepts the offering of the kneeling Gaspard; behind him the upright figure of Balthasar is seen in the act of removing the crown from his head whilst Melchior

points towards the Child with his right hand. On the right near the Virgin St. Joseph stands grasping a long stick. Higher on the left a servant holds the three horses which brought the Wise Men; from the right two camels are seen emerging from a valley situated between rocky mountains on which are placed fortified castles; opposite are depicted the two shepherds, one of whom carries a musical instrument, while the sheep graze nearby watched over by a dog. High up we see the star and four adoring angels.

Our attribution to Ottaviano Nelli must seem absolutely clear to anyone who knows the art of the great Gubbian master. A comparison of this Adoration with his authentic works, makes all further arguments superfluous. All the figures composing this picture of the Worcester Museum have their counterpart in the Trinci Chapel of Foligno, better still in the frescoes of the apse of St. Agostino in Gubbio. But a striking resemblance exists between the St. Joseph with his strange cap, ornated with sheep's skin, and the same figure in the Circumcision of the Vatican where even the ornamental design engraved in the nimbus is identical.

But while it is easy to attribute this picture to Ottaviano, it is more difficult to accurately date and give to it its precise place in the long artistic career of this painter who has not yet been studied as he deserves and of whom we possess many works, few of which, however, are dated. There are the Madonna of the Belvedere of Gubbio and the polyptych of Pietralunga of 1403, some detached frescoes in the Gallery of Assisi of 1422 (for the greater part work of assistants), the Trinci Chapel at Foligno of 1424, and poor fragments of a fresco in the church of S. Croce at Urbino, the remains of a decoration executed between 1428 and 1432.

To me it seems probable that the panel at Worcester was made between the Madonna of the Belvedere of 1403 and the Trinci Chapel of 1424, nearer the former date than the latter and that it is one of the oldest works of the master which has come to us. In confirmation of this we have the elongated and elegant forms of the figures, the types of the faces with little shade and relief, and the still simple and somewhat schematic manner of draping the clothes. In his late works and even already in the Trinci Chapel of 1424, Ottaviano loses the charm of the faces which had characterized his first two works, the types become more vulgar, the shading executed in dark colours, the folds large and the form of the human body heavy and massive, faults which do not as yet appear in the Adoration of the Magi.

This work is besides certainly entirely executed by the hand of the master who, when he became famous, relied too often upon the help of his collaborators.

This is not the place for a complete chronological list of the works of Ottaviano but I may repeat that the panel at Worcester was probably executed in the first ten years of the fifteenth century. The colours are rich and varied, those more often adopted by a miniaturist than by a painter, but all the same gay and harmonious. The decorative effect is very great and an intimate and religious sentiment emanates from the sacred scene.

Umberto Cynoli

AN OTTAVIANO NELLI IN THE WORCESTER MUSEUM

THE Worcester Museum some months ago bought, and published¹ a most winning picture representing the Adoration of the Magi, of which an outright attribution is prudently avoided and a problematic one hazarded as "Possibly by Michele Giambono." To the general or immature student who is not familiar with Venetian painting of the early fifteenth century there may be nothing very strange in this, especially as there existed certain common stylistic elements in the European schools of the period and particularly between those of Venice and Umbria, to the latter of which the Worcester picture unquestionably belongs. And the error would perhaps not be as startling were it not the typical product of a well-known hand, which even those responsible for the present attribution will easily recognize as that of Ottaviano Nelli.²

It is one of Nelli's most characteristic works (and Nelli was a master who changed little in the course of his life, so far as we at present know). Only it is daintier in sentiment and more precious in treatment than the frescoes in the Palazzo dei Trincei, the Pietralunga and the Assisi Virgins. One might be tediously explicit and indicate innumerable points of similarity between this and other

¹ In the Bulletin of the Worcester Art Museum, April, 1920.

² I am pleased to learn that such a master of Umbrian painting as Mr. F. Mason Perkins agrees with my attribution.

pictures wherein the master, even were he disguising his manner, betrays himself, but in a brief and hurried protest and a case as clear as this one, it ought to be enough to lead the attention from the general look, the idiosyncracies of mould and movement to such peculiarities as the short heads, the bird-like faces and faces with round bags under the eyes, the long straight lids, the heavy upper lips, the woolly lamb's curl of the hair.

The maturity of the style would put the Adoration about fifteen years beyond the dated polyptych at Pietralunga (1403) into the period between 1415 and 1420.

Richard Offner.

A PAINTING OF ANTONIO DA VITERBO

I DO not know if the Madonna and two angels adoring the Child Jesus of the Worcester Museum has already been attributed to Antonio da Viterbo called "il Pastura," but it certainly is a work of his. To convince one of this it is sufficient to compare it with the Nativity of the Gallery of Viterbo, where the kneeling Madonna is represented in the same manner escorted by angels, in front of an open shelter supported by square beams. In the Adoration of Worcester the form of the faces is slightly longer and while it preserves the manner of draping of Perugino, the type of face with its small mouth, round chin, very faint eyebrows and stringy hair reminds us rather of Pintoricchio from whom the entire scenery with its rocks and small scattered trees, is also copied. The panel at Worcester is the best work of the Viterban master as one may judge from the grace of the adoring figures, the plasticity of the forms, the intimacy of the subject and the subtlety of the landscape with its green tone against a clear sky. Anterior to the frescoes of S. Maria di Corneto of 1509, I believe this work to be executed after the collaboration of its author with Pintoricchio in Orvieto and the Borgia Apartment of the Vatican, and therefore probably about 1500 when the artist returned to his native town.

Umberto Gnoli



ANTONIO DA VITERBO: ADORATION OF THE CHILD JESUS
The Museum of Art, Worcester, Mass.



OTTAVIANO NELLI: ADORATION OF THE MAGI
The Museum of Art, Worcester, Mass.

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ON A PORTRAIT OF THOMAS SULLY PAINTED BY HIMSELF

THOMAS SULLY did not, like his friend Henry Inman, depreciate portrait painting and consider it a lesser art. It is true that the art had frequently degenerated into the portrait manufactory against which the great portrait painter William Hogarth railed. Thomas Sully was eminently a portrait painter, and could say of Gilbert Stuart: "I had the privilege of standing by the artist's chair . . . a situation I valued more, at that moment, than I shall ever again appreciate any station in life." Struggling against heavy odds he won for himself a place beside Stuart, Neagle and Inman.

Thomas Sully was born June, 1783, in Horncastle, England. His parents were English actors who moved to the United States in 1792, induced by West of the Charleston Theatre in South Carolina. Young Sully went to school for a short time in Charleston and had as a schoolmate the gifted Charles Fraser in 1793. In 1795 he was placed in an insurance office. Always busy drawing and neglecting his work, he was presently placed with a Frenchman named Belzons, a miniature painter who was an uncle by marriage, to learn drawing. The Frenchman's irritability caused a stormy scene and Sully left after a brief period in 1799. He then started for Richmond where his brother Lawrence was established as a miniature painter. In 1801 they both moved to Norfolk and there the sight of the paintings by Benbridge started Thomas Sully painting in oils. In 1804 Sully moved back to Richmond and later to Petersburg. The death of his brother in 1804 left him with his sister-in-law and nieces to support, and he returned to Richmond. In 1805 he married his brother's widow in North Carolina. In 1806 he went to New York. Always anxious to improve his work Sully at this time visited the eccentric John Wesley Jarvis and John Trumbull. Jarvis communicated freely whatever information he could. It is amusing to contrast his generosity with the peculiar proceeding of Trumbull. Sully had to pay Trumbull a hundred dollars and have a portrait painted of his wife, and Trumbull kept an air of secrecy about the entire matter.

An ardent admiration for the portraits of Gilbert Stuart turned Sully's steps to Boston and as soon as his finances allowed he was on his way. He moved his family to Hartford in 1807, and went on alone to Boston. A letter of introduction to Andrew Allen, the

British consul, brought about a meeting with Gilbert Stuart, who was as generous about giving the results of his experience as Jarvis had been.

In the autumn of 1808 Sully returned to New York. Lack of employment led him to offer his services to Jarvis, who remarked, "It is a great shame that it should be so," and employed him and paid him generously. In February, 1809, he went to Philadelphia and shared a studio with Benjamin Trott, the miniature painter. Philadelphia was to remain his more permanent home for, although he travelled much he always returned to that city as his place of residence. Sully's prices in Philadelphia in 1809 were at first fifty dollars for a portrait. This presently fell to thirty, and he accepted with eagerness the proposal of certain gentlemen to sail for London and copy "the best masterpieces." The remuneration was to be three thousand dollars, but the plans did not materialize and Sully made the trip for fourteen hundred, regardless of circumstances, and bent on improvement. "I will not dwell," he wrote later, "upon the slavery I went through, nor the close economy used to enable me to fulfill my engagement; but, although habitually industrious I never passed nine months of such incessant application."

He left New York on June 18, 1809, and arrived in Liverpool July 13. He first visited Birmingham, where his grandmother lived, and then went on to London. There he met C. B. King, the portrait painter, and they shared quarters in Buckingham Place, Fitzroy Square. With King, Sully visited Benjamin West, presenting a letter from William Rawle. In Sully's own words, West gave him "the advantage of his instruction and the free use of his pictures."

Sully also had a letter to Sir Thomas Lawrence. He wrote: "A miniature painter named Miles, who used to be in the employ of the Emperor Paul of Russia, upon Paul's death came to America and taught drawing. He gave me a letter to a number of painters, among whom was Sir Thomas Lawrence. He received me warmly on Miles' account, but was too much of a gentleman not to add, 'and on your own also'."¹ He also visited Sir William Beechy and Henry Hopner. Indefatigable in his desire to progress he made extensive notes on the methods of the various painters he met. With King he studied anatomy by candlelight and seriously impaired his eyesight. After nine months he returned to Philadelphia again sharing the studio of Benjamin Trott.

¹ See the "Recollections of an Old Painter," by Thomas Sully in *Hours at Home*, November, 1869.

In 1811 he gave some instruction to Charles Robert Leslie. What it amounted to, Sully himself has told. He wrote: "Just before Leslie went abroad I said to him, 'Charles, you know nothing of oil painting, I'll give you a lesson.' I painted the head of an old man for him, he following me, and in a short time he learned all the trickery of painting in oil. He was intensely grateful for this little service."

Portraits of Dr. Benjamin Rush and George Frederick Cooke, the actor, date from the year 1813. In 1818 Sully went to New York. March and April of that year he visited Baltimore. In 1821 he went to "Monticello," the home of Thomas Jefferson, near Charlottesville, Virginia, to paint a full portrait of the great Virginian for West Point.

In August, 1821, he was again in Baltimore. Presumably returning to Philadelphia he made two trips to Boston, one from July to September in 1831, and another in 1836.

A second visit to England was made in 1837. Sully wrote: "In 1837 I again went to England, and while there painted a portrait of Queen Victoria on a commission from the St. George's Society of Philadelphia. After I had almost despaired of being able to obtain a sitting, my friend, Lord Francis Edgerton, secured Lord Palmerston's influence in my behalf. I called one day on the latter; he had just turned out of his bed and was sipping his morning coffee. 'Everything is arranged', he said, 'the Queen will sit today at ten'." Blanche Sully, the artist's daughter, accompanied her father on this trip and gave an entertaining account of these sittings to Anne H. Wharton, who quotes from the conversation in her book, "Heirlooms in Miniatures." In 1838 they returned to the United States.

In 1840 he visited Washington, D. C., from April to June, Baltimore from June to September, and by December of the same year he was in Boston. He revisited Charleston, South Carolina, for the first time in many years, in December, 1841, staying until 1842. He again spent the winter of 1845-1846 in Charleston. He was in Providence, Rhode Island, in June, 1847, and in Boston, July, 1848. He visited Richmond from April to June, 1849, in October, 1850, and June, 1851. He was in Baltimore in October, 1852, and June, 1853.

Concerning Sully's later days, A. H. Wharton wrote: "Miss Blanche Sully, who is still living (1898) in Philadelphia, relates many interesting stories of her father and mother. . . Miss Sully says that her father painted most industriously through the hours of

daylight, but as soon as the light began to fade he would call for Blanche, whom he playfully called his 'walking-stick'; and together they would sally forth for a ramble into the country, which was not so difficult to reach in those days."

An excellent photograph showing Sully at his easel is reproduced in Joseph Jackson's "Market Street." Besides this there are a number of self portraits and several portraits painted by his friends.

Thomas Sully died on November 5, 1872, and the obituary notice in the *Philadelphia Enquirer* for the next day read: "It is with no ordinary feelings of regret that we announce the death of the eminent and venerable artist Thomas Sully. This event, in which Philadelphia feels a special loss, took place on Fifth Street above Chestnut. Mr. Sully, who had attained the venerable age of ninety-one years, had been in delicate health for some time particularly since receiving a fall last winter, the effects of which were aggravated by the severe heat of the previous summer."

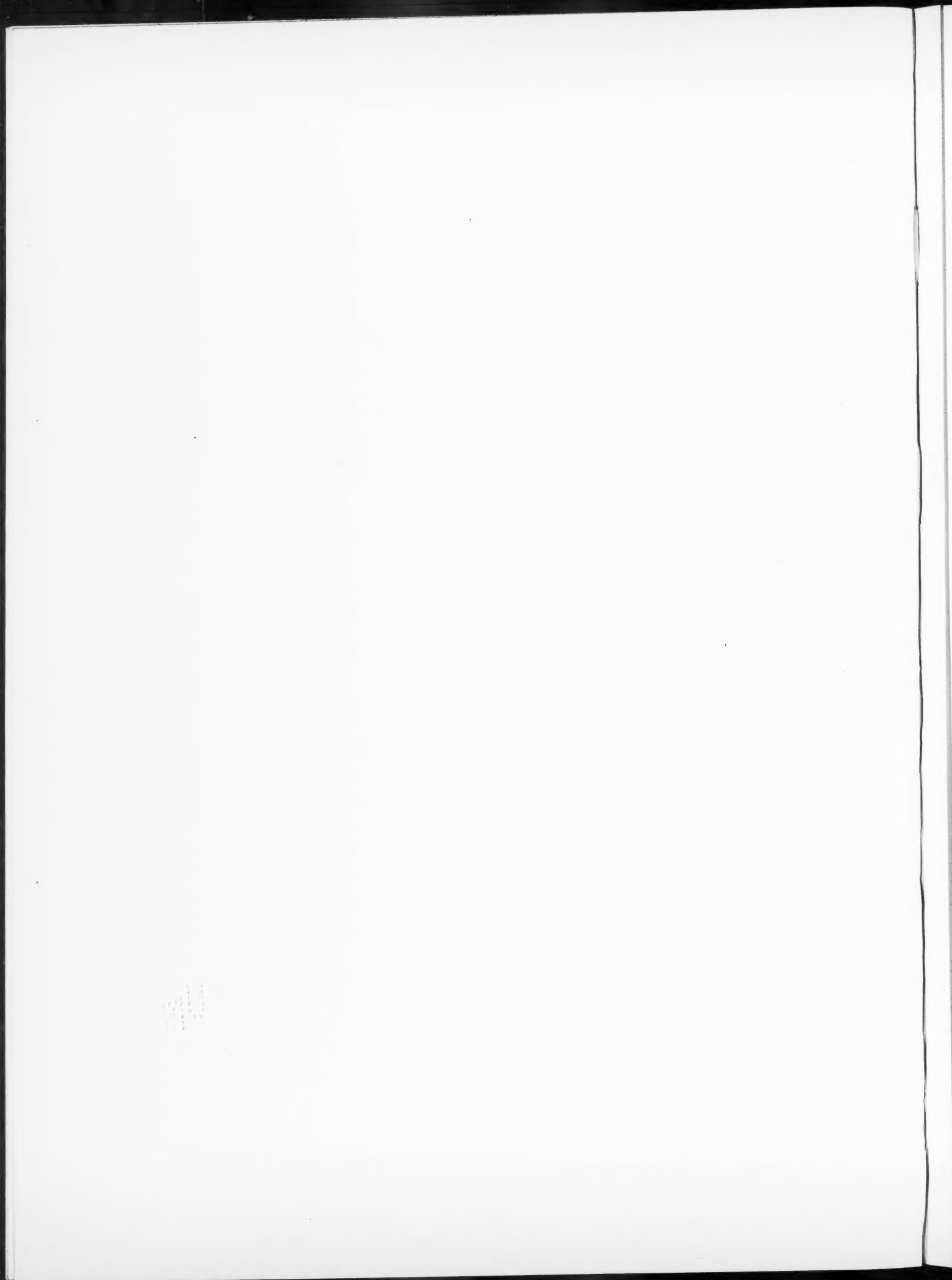
Such was the life of the man whose portrait by himself now hangs in the Corcoran Gallery of Art. The draughtsmanship is excellent. The artist has in this picture surpassed in the delineation of character his other self portraits. Most of these are painted with the generalization of the British portrait painters like Raeburn and Romney. The portrait in question is drawn with the restraint of Dominique Ingres.

The picture shows a white-haired man with deep blue eyes against a dark red curtain. The only relief to the dark coat and black stock is the narrow strip of white collar. The picture measures thirty by twenty-five inches. It is reproduced by the permission of Mr. C. Powell Minnegerode, the Director of the Gallery.

Theodore Dalton



THOMAS SULLY: SELF PORTRAIT
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.



RICHARD PATON'S "ACTION BETWEEN THE SERAPIS AND BON HOMME RICHARD"

IN THE long story of the Revolt of the North American Colonies from the oppression of the British Government of the day there are some incidents which stand out in such high relief, and so entirely apart from the strife of the rival parties, that they can never cease to thrill. They belong equally to the annals of heroism and fortitude of the two countries, and so, with the common language, help to constitute the heritage of both Britain and the United States. The most conspicuous illustration that could be cited is perhaps that of the famous battle of Flamborough Head on September 23, 1779, between an English squadron under Captain Pearson on the "Serapis," and an American squadron under Captain Paul Jones on the "Bon Homme Richard." This great life and death struggle has never ceased to inspire historians, poets and painters throughout the intervening hundred and forty years; and will continue to do so as long as patriotism remains a pride and a virtue in the two countries.

The story has been told so many times, not only by the two great leaders in the battle, but by the historians past and present of both countries that it is not necessary here to recapitulate the details, except to say that in this, as in so many other victories, the spoils were not all to the victors; for, whilst Captain Paul Jones, fighting against uneven odds, scored a victory, it was purchased at great sacrifice of life and material, and the British convoy got away with a fairly clean pair of heels. We are now more particularly concerned with the pictures to which the famous action gave birth, and of which the most important and best known is that by Richard Paton which just recently passed to America. A glance through the Royal Academy catalogues of the year or two following the action reveals the forgotten fact that its topical as well as its historical character was fully realised by the marine painters of the day. The two most prominent artists of the sea at that period were Dominic Serres, R.A., and Richard Paton, and both were represented at the Royal Academy of 1780 with naval pieces mostly inspired by recent events, and each exhibited a picture of the action between the "Serapis" and the "Bon Homme Richard." The first "echo," so to speak, we have of the fight is Grigniou's portrait of Captain Pearson,¹

¹ It may be mentioned that in the Paris Salon of 1781 was a bust of Paul Jones by Houdon, No. 261.

which was No. 188; and it was not until, following the order of the Catalogue, and reaching the ante-room, that we come upon Richard Paton's eighth exhibit of the year, No. 314. "The action between the Serapis, Captain Pearson, the Countess of Scarborough, and Paul Jones's Squadron." A little further on, but still in the ante-room, we come to No. 359, Dominic Serres's "The Engagement between the Serapis, Captain Pearson, and the Countess of Scarborough with Paul Jones's and his Squadron." These were all that appeared in the Royal Academy of that year; but at the rival exhibition, the Free Society of Artists of the same season, Thomas Mitchell, an employee in the Royal Dockyard at Deptford, also had a picture of the battle, and it was this same Thomas Mitchell who exhibited another picture of the same event in the Royal Academy of 1781, No. 174. One of these two pictures by Mitchell was lent by the Rev. E. Elton to the Naval Exhibition, London, in 1891, No. 416. Eight years later, to pass over the interval, Lieutenant William Elliott exhibited a picture of the same action at the Royal Academy; the same artist also sent to the Society of Artists, 1790, another picture of the fight "from a different point of view."

These do not exhaust the list of contemporary pictures inspired by the famous action; but it is interesting to note that they were all painted by ex-seamen, for Paton, Serres and Mitchell had all served at sea, and their pictures therefore all have a professional value which would be denied to those of the mere landmen. Our more immediate concern, however, is with Richard Paton and his picture of the battle. Of Paton all that is known is that he was born about the year 1717, that he was found as a poor boy on Tower Hill, London, by Admiral Sir Charles Knowles (who died in 1777) and by him taken to sea. How long he remained here it is not known, but probably some years. He subsequently obtained a post in the Excise, and at his death, after a long and painful illness, on March 7, 1791, he was one of the accountants general in that office. It is not known from whom he took lessons in painting, but he began to exhibit naval pictures at the Society of Artists in 1762, and continued to do so until 1770; whilst his pictures appeared at the Royal Academy from 1776 to 1780. He etched as well as painted pictures, and his works in engraved form had a large sale. Edwards, who was somewhat chary of his praise, in his "Anecdotes of Painters," says "it is certain that as a ship painter he produced some good pictures, as may be seen by some of his performances in the Council

Room at the Guildhall, which were presented to the city by the late Alderman Boydell." Other examples of his work are at Greenwich Hospital, and five of his dockyard pictures are at Hampton Court. The portraits in some of his pictures were painted by J. H. Mortimer and F. Wheatley. "He was," says Edwards, "a man of respectable character, but rather assuming in his manner." His naval views were chiefly engraved by Fittler, Lerpinière and Canot, and were published by the Boydells in Pall Mall, all on a large scale, usually about 24 x 20 inches, and nearly all issued at 10/6 each. He was especially good in moonlight effects.

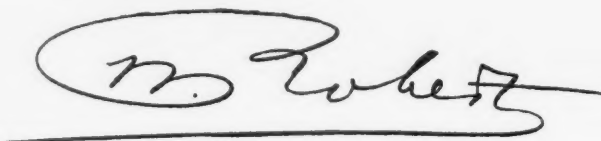
Paton's appointment in the Excise evidently left him ample time to paint pictures for his own pleasure, and probably the royalties which he received from the Boydells for the engravings represented a good round sum. Nearly all his most famous pictures remained in his possession at the time of his death. In March, 1792, the whole of his remaining works came up for sale at Christie's, but the prices were small, ranging from £5 to £42. The engraved picture of the action between the "Serapis" and the "Bon Homme Richard" was lot 69 in the sale, and was bought for 10½ gs. (= £11.0.6) by Captain Vandeput,² who also bought seven of the others. For over a century the picture disappeared, and was discovered in the collection of the late Lord Amherst of Hackney. Even there its importance was not fully recognised, and it is owing to Mr. H. W. Bromhead's researches that its importance and interest came to light. Lord Amherst of Hackney was more famous as a collector of rare books and fine old tapestries than of pictures, of which, however, he inherited a large number; probably this of Richard Paton had been in his family for some generations, until, in fact, 1908. It had, at all events, the good fortune to be in careful hands, for it is in perfect condition, and is unquestionably the most important and interesting pictorial document in existence of the genesis of the United States Navy.

The engraving, now of great rarity, by Lerpinière and Fittler was published by Boydell December 12, 1780. It measures 17½ inches by nearly 23 inches, and the lower margin contains a brief epitome in English and French of the opposing vessels, with a list of the

² I am indebted to my friend, Mr. A. Vandeput, of the Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, for the identification of Captain Vandeput. He was George Vandeput, who spent most of his life at sea. He became lieutenant under Captain Hugh Palliser in 1759; and after holding various appointments in 1773 he commissioned the "Asia" line of battle ship for the North American station, noteworthy for an episode which occurred in 1776 off New York; in 1782 he was at the Relief of Gibraltar, and in 1793 was promoted to rear admiral; four years later he was in command of the North American squadron; he died suddenly at sea March 14, 1800, and was taken in the "Cleopatra" to Providence and buried there.

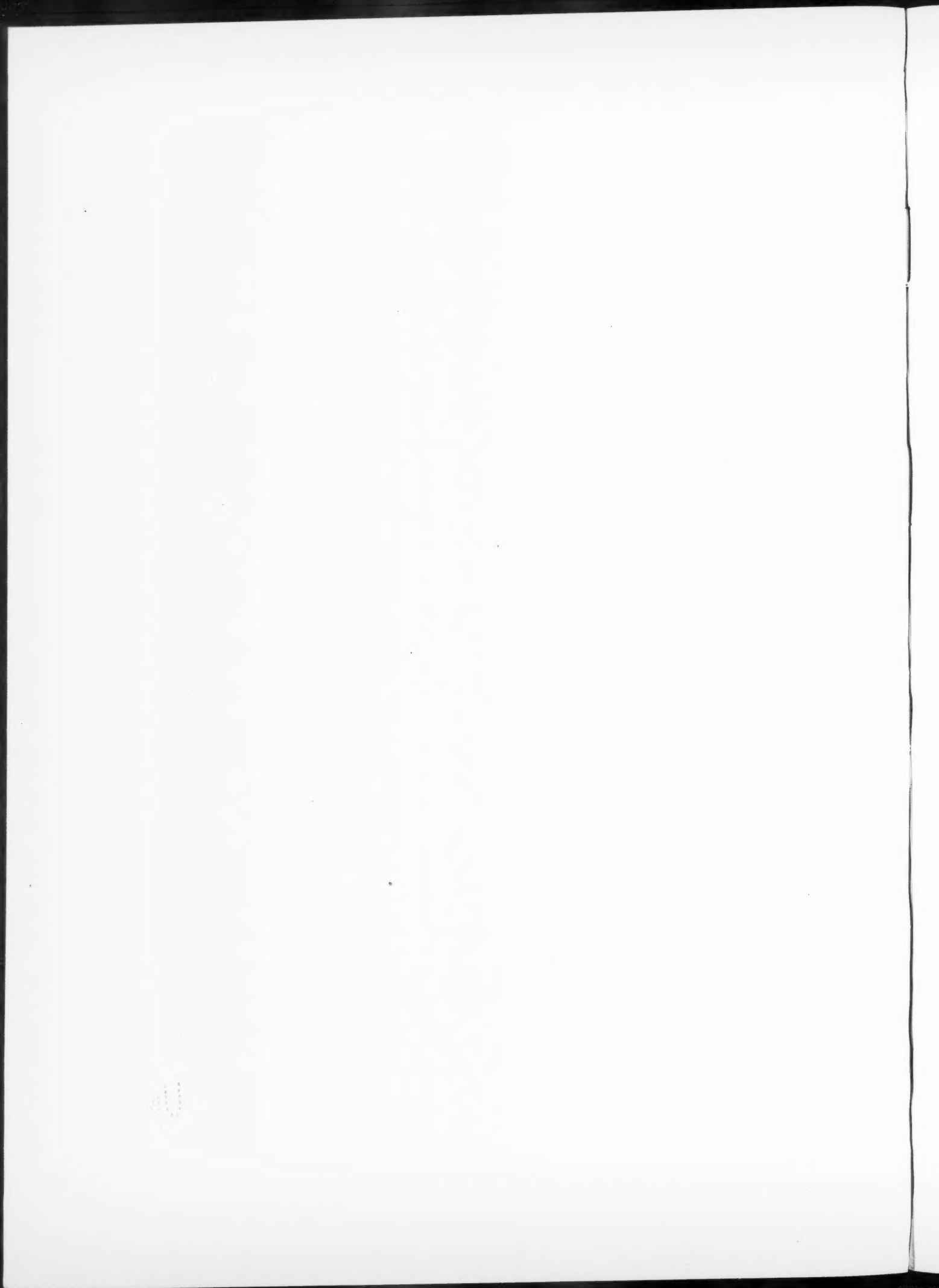
casualties; it is dedicated to Captain Pearson, who was knighted by the British King for his conduct on this occasion.

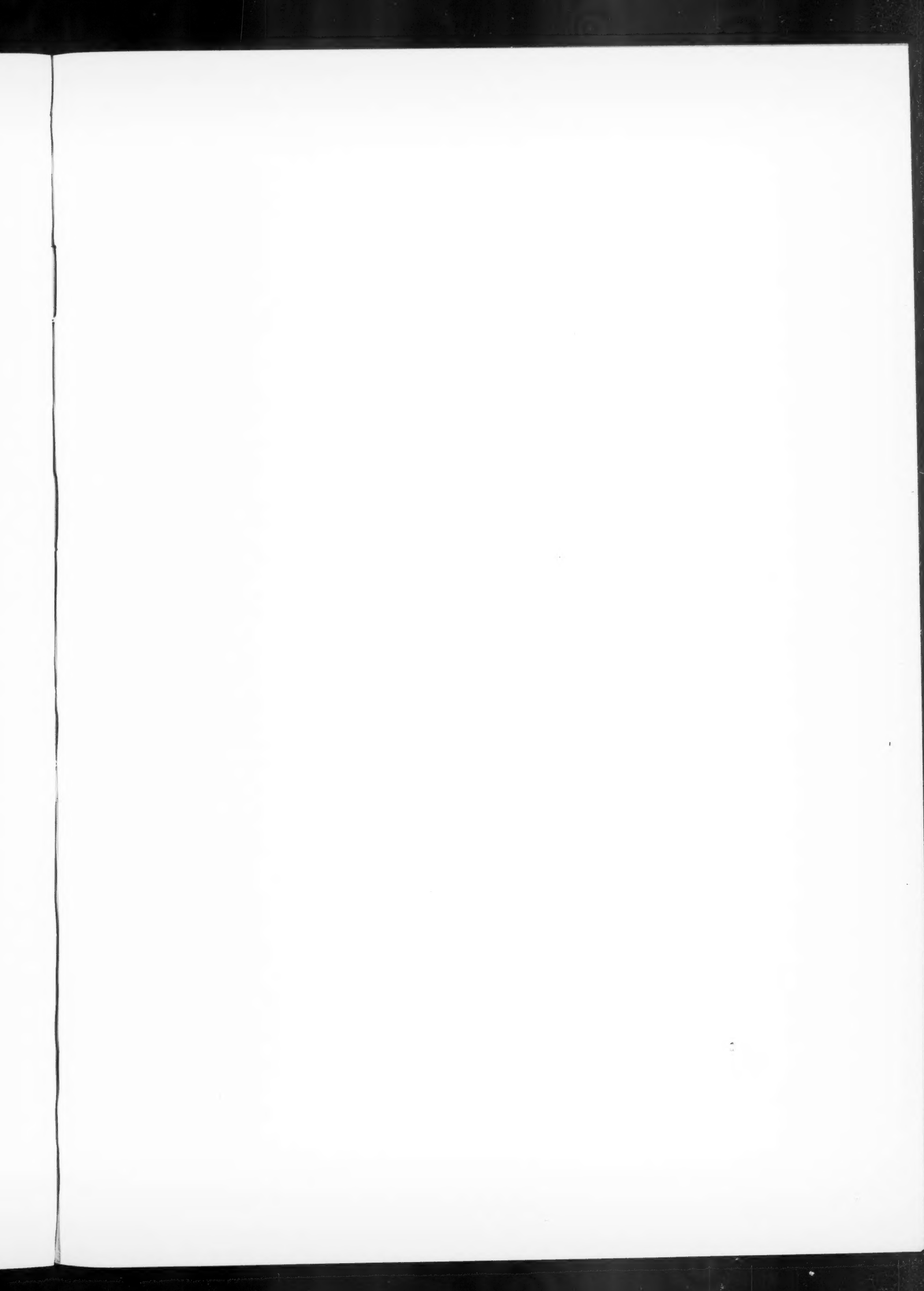
The time selected by Paton for his view of the action is 8 o'clock in the evening, when "a round harvest moon lit up the scene." The artist evidently based his picture on some first hand information, supplied doubtlessly by officers present. How far it agrees with the diagram of the engagement as printed in Mrs. Reginald de Koven's "Life and Letters of John P. Jones," published by the Scribner's in 1913 (Vol. I, facing p. 450) it is not necessary to discuss. But the picture itself bears out Sequier's judgment that Paton was "a faithful sketcher of vessels," and that "as a rule he succeeded better in colouring the skies or coast scenery than he did when painting the water." The great action is nearing its end, the curtain of night is falling over one of the most famous naval battles in Anglo-American history, and from it the endurance and valour of both countries emerge with unsullied honour.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Robert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end. Below the signature is a single horizontal line.



RICHARD PATON: ACTION BETWEEN THE SERAPIS AND BOX HOMME RICHARD







SIR WILLIAM PEPPERELL'S ENGLISH SILVER TEA-CADDIES AND SUGAR CANISTER, 1745

SIR WILLIAM PEPPERELL'S PRESENTATION SILVER

THE accompanying illustration displays a pair of massive old English silver tea-caddies and a sugar canister contained in a silver-mounted leather case. The canister was wrought in London in the year 1738-1739 by a goldsmith who cannot be identified in the present mutilated condition of his mark, while the caddies were made a year earlier by a London goldsmith named John Newton.

Each piece is chased in the rococo manner, characteristic of much contemporary English domestic silver and popularised by the French Huguenot refugee goldsmiths and their families. The Pepperell arms and the following inscription are engraved on the three pieces:

LOUISBOURG
SURRENDER'D
TO HIS MAJES^S
FORCES
17 JUNE 1745

The case has silver hinges and joints and a silver handle and plate on the cover, the latter being engraved with the Pepperell arms. Engraved on the large silver plate in front is the following inscription:

IN TOKEN OF THEIR
FRIENDSHIP HARMONY &
SUCCESS AT THE CONQUEST OF
THE ISLAND OF CAPE BRETON
PETER WARREN ESQ.^R REAR-ADMIRAL
OF THE BLUE PRESENTS THIS CASE
WITH CANISTERS & SUGAR BOX
TO S.^R W.^M PEPPERELL BAR.^T
LOUISBOURG SURRENDER'D TO
HIS MAJES FORCES
17 JUNE
1745

Restoration has been effected in the leather case in more recent years, the handle and plate and joints on the cover having been made in 1816-1817, a fact determined beyond doubt by the London hall-mark on these parts. The large silver plate in front of the case was made expressly in 1745 for the inscription.

The story of the gallant Sir William Pepperell and his New England force in the capture of the great fortress of Louisbourg in

Cape Breton—one of the most glorious episodes in the annals of Colonial America—is familiar to all and need not be retold here. Pepperell himself was received with signal honour by King George II and was created a baronet, the first native American to receive that honour. Admiral Sir Peter Warren, who presented this silver to Sir William Pepperell, was in command of the British naval force operating with the New England troops. The Commodore, to give him his rank at that time, also presented Pepperell with a large silver salver, which descended by inheritance from the second Sir William Pepperell to his son-in-law, William Congreve, husband of his daughter, Mary Pepperell.

Sir William Pepperell, the second and last holder of the baronetcy,¹ was a loyalist in the American War of Independence and on his departure as an exile from his native land he was permitted by Congress to take away all the presentation silver. The pieces, which are now illustrated for the first time, were bequeathed by him to his daughter, Harriet, wife of Sir Charles Palmer, second baronet, with a portrait group of himself, his wife, baby son (who died young), and his three daughters, Elizabeth, afterwards wife of Rev. Henry Hulton, Mary, married to William Congreve, and Harriet, afterwards Lady Palmer, painted by John Singleton Copley. This picture and the silver have descended as heirlooms to the present owner, Lady Augusta Palmer, of Wanlip Hall, Leicestershire.

A pair of silver candlesticks, bearing the same inscription as the tea caddies and canister, have passed by inheritance to other descendants of the second and last Sir William Pepperell.

E. Alfred Jones.

¹William Pepperell Sparhawk was the son of Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Pepperell, first baronet, and her husband, Colonel Nathaniel Sparhawk, and by the terms of his grandfather's will was required to assume the surname of Pepperell in lieu of Sparhawk.

